

# Building Great Cities: Houston's Opportunity



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It is difficult to design a space  
that will not attract people. What  
is remarkable is how often this  
has been achieved.

--*William H. Whyte*

# Return to Community



- Americans desperately want to belong to a community--a “village”
- Pre WWII: Ethnic villages and communities the norm

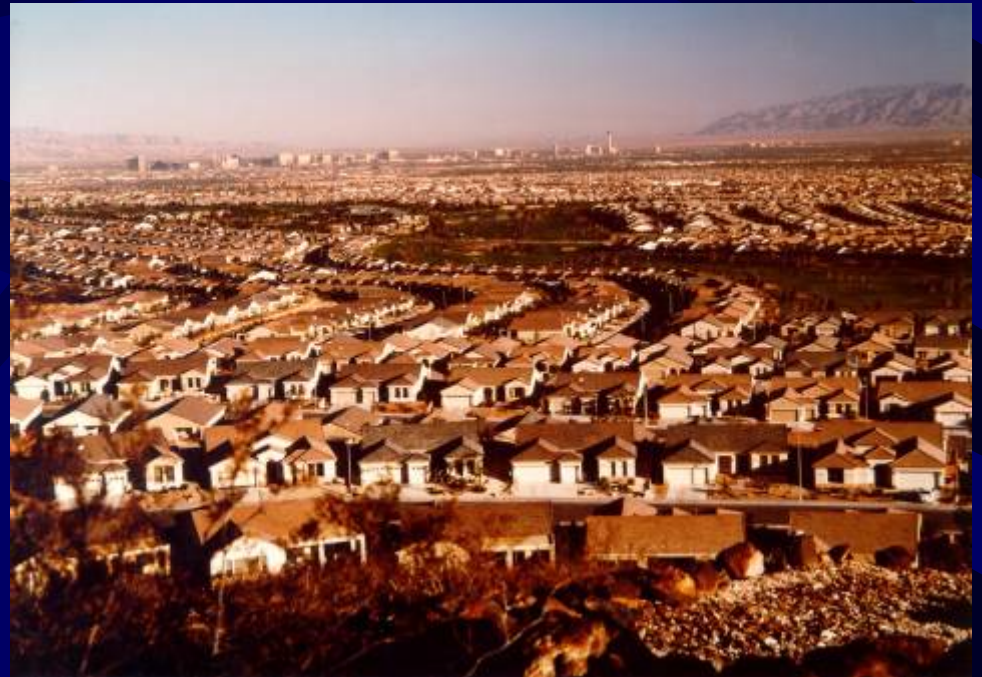


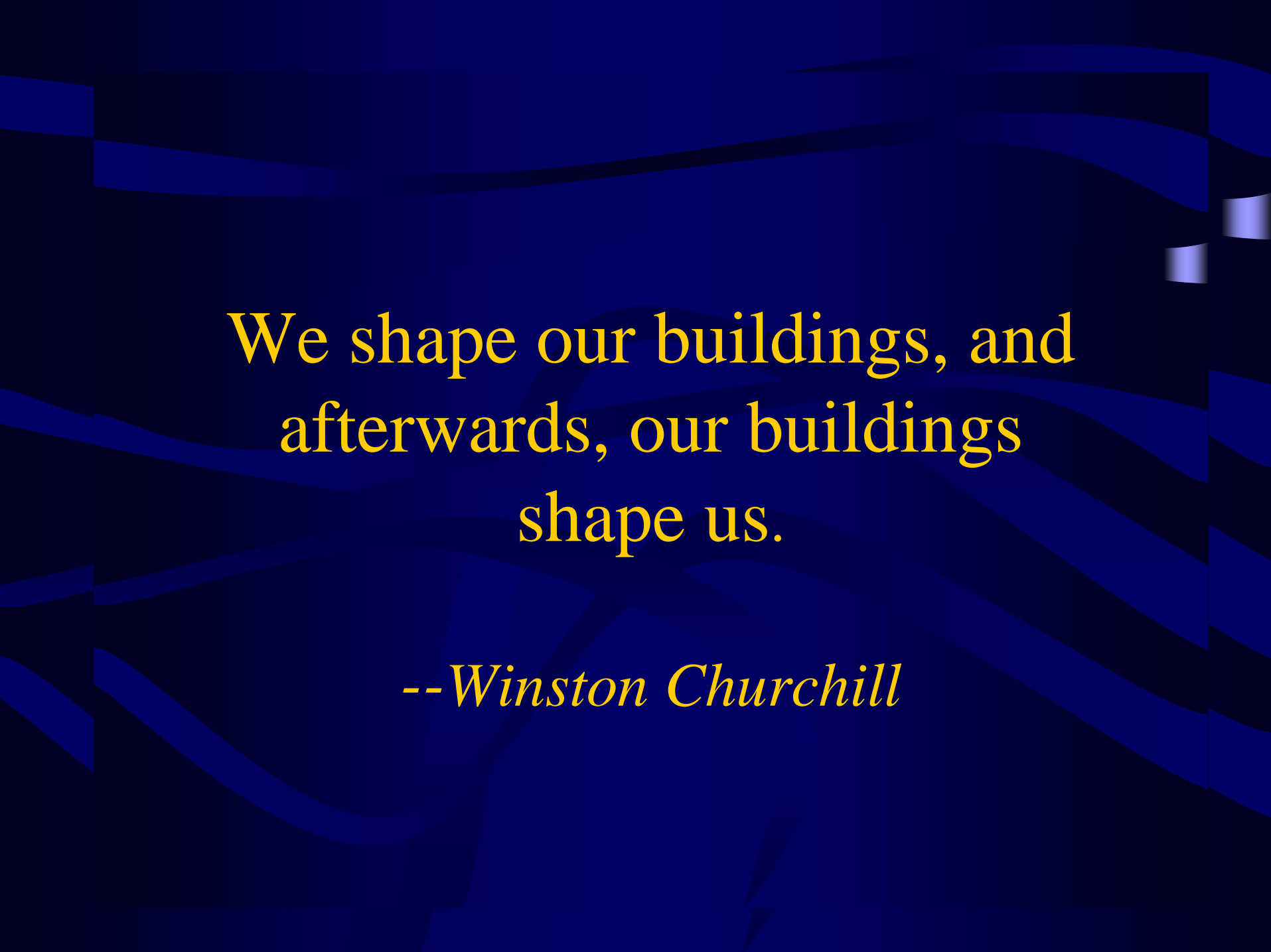
# Loss of Village...

- Then



- Now





We shape our buildings, and  
afterwards, our buildings  
shape us.

*--Winston Churchill*

In every community:  
places we treasure...





In every community:  
places we want to change



# The Price of Village

- Today: people pay a premium to drive and park--*ONCE*
- Villages are among the world's highest priced real estate
- Problem: villages are too rare, too precious, and too expensive!





# The Opportunity: Placemaking

- Pedestrian orientation
- Compact development
- Mix of uses
- Civic uses
- Transit
- Urban or suburban
- New or redevelopment
- Transformation





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Images by Urban Advantage





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The background is a deep blue with several lighter blue, wavy, horizontal lines that create a sense of movement. In the upper right corner, there is a small, three-dimensional silver cylinder.

America is undergoing some  
profound changes...



# Changing Demographics of Metro Areas

- Married couples with kids no longer dominant
- Empty nesters on the rise
- Single person households want “urbanity”
- The rise of the “Creative Class”



# Married Couples with Children No Longer Dominant



27% of households  
in 1990, now only  
22%

# Aging of the U.S. Population



- By 2020:  
70 million over 55
- By 2050:  
50+% over 55
- *AARP*: 71% of  
older households  
want to be in  
walking distance of  
transit



# Converging Demand for Housing



**Baby boomers**



**Echo boomers**

- Singles will soon be the new majority
- By 2010 Echo Boomers will total 34% of the population
- Both kind of boomers seeking similar housing options

# The New Face of the American Family

- By 2050: Half US population will be non-white
- The average Hispanic household is 3.5 persons, average white household 2.5 persons
- Extended family living. Age-in-place housing. Transit.



# Everything is a drive away....

Suburban moms spend 17 full days a year behind the wheel—more than the average parent spends dressing, bathing and feeding a child.

--Surface Transportation  
Policy Project





# Rising Transportation Costs— in Money *and* Time

Skyrocketing gasoline  
prices

Longer travel distances

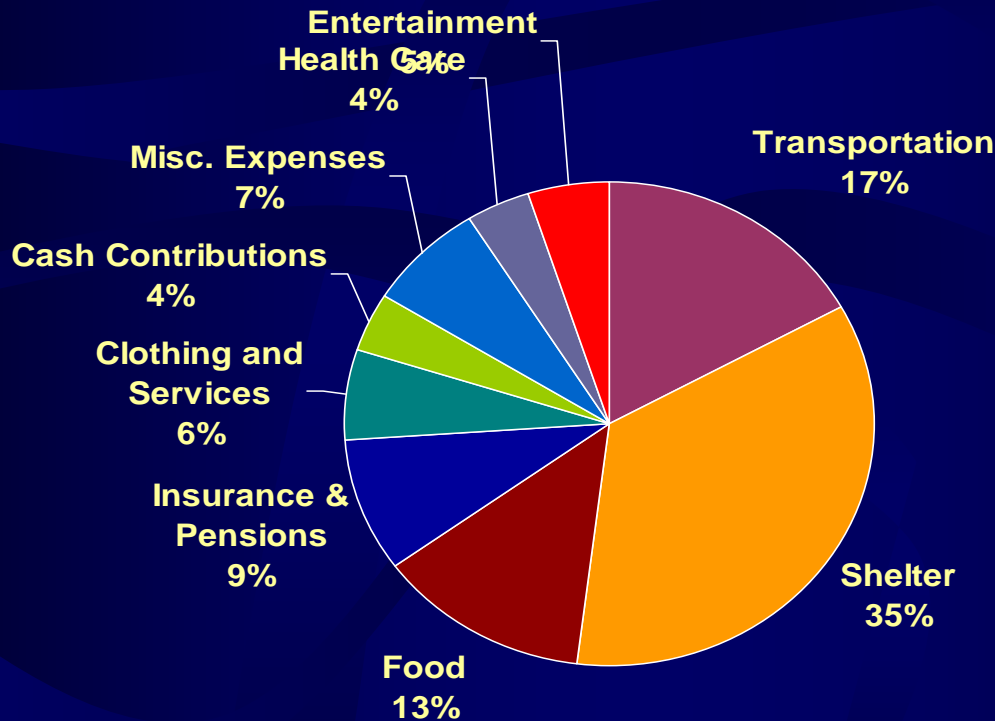
Greater commute time

Unpredictability of  
congestion

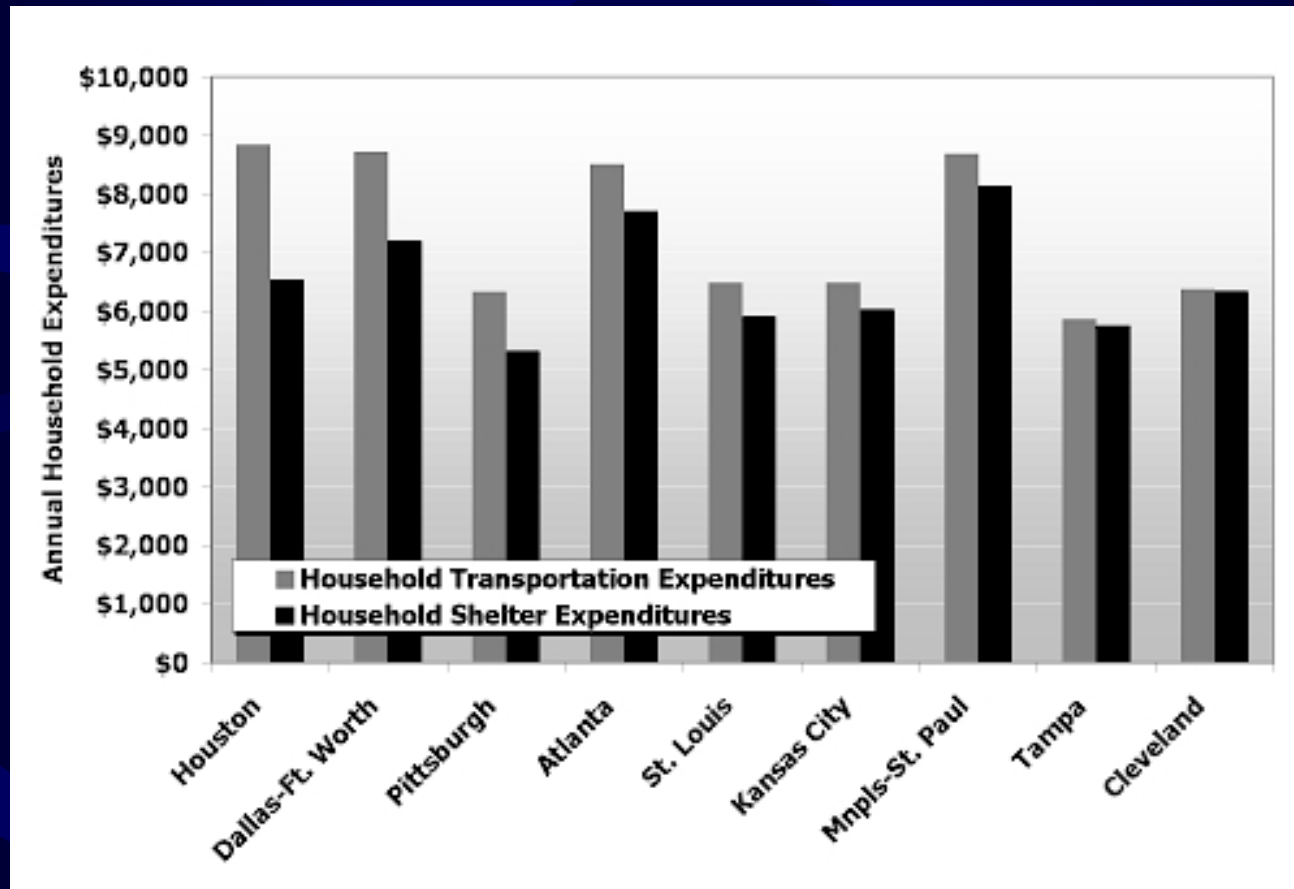


# Transportation is the Highest Household Cost after Housing

## Typical American Household Budget



# Cities Spending *More* on Transportation than Shelter



Only 60% of Americans drive cars...





# Transit “Building Boom”

- Rail new “darling” of transit—changing perception and ridership
- Heavy demand for rail/trolley/streetcar/bus rapid transit in new regions
- Expansion of existing systems



# Focus on Health/Prevention



# Profound Technology



- 24/7 connectedness
- “Speed of light” transactions
- Global marketplace
- Multi-tasking
- “Post-Geographic” employees with no permanent office
  - 15% now; 40% by 2012
- Generation Gap

# Sustainability and Design

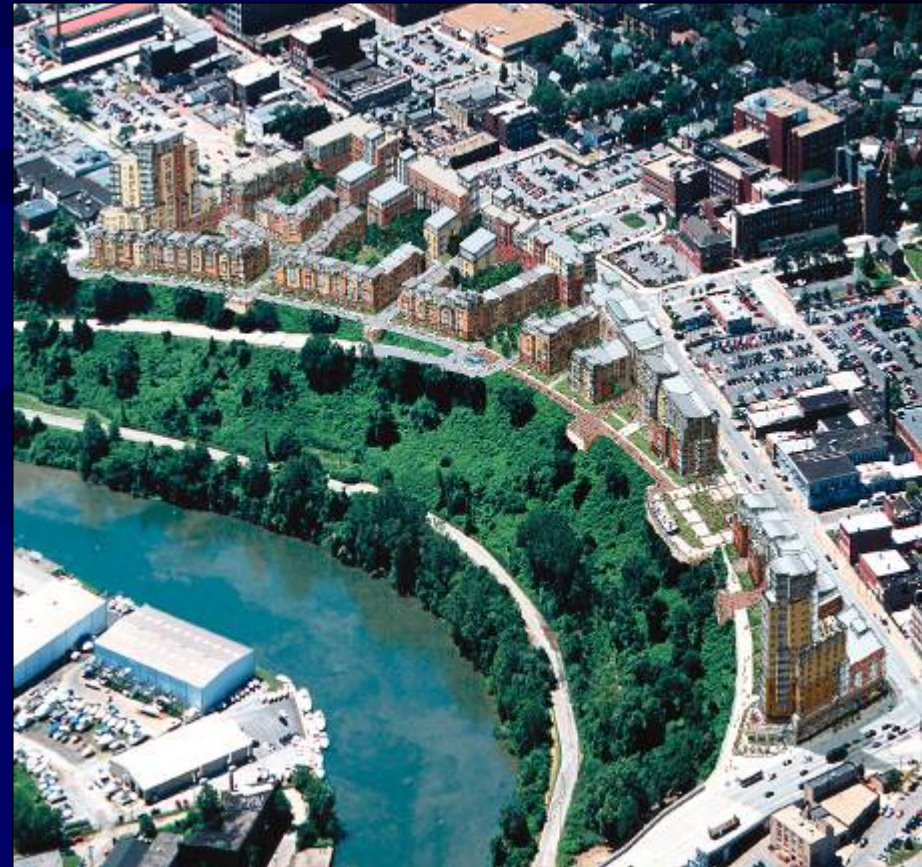


- Attention to global warming, reduction of greenhouse emissions
- Sensitivity to limited resources
- Value for green buildings
- Rise of the celebrity architect



# Urban Reinvestment

- 75% of downtowns surveyed gained population in 1990's (Sohmer/ Lang 2002)
- New investment in housing, retail in downtowns and older suburbs



“Anything Anytime/  
Have it my way”



# Economic Polarization





# Intense Competition Among Cities



Grand Central Station, NYC



The Embarcadero,  
San Francisco



# Intense Competition Among Cities



Suburbs  
Market Commons  
Arlington County, Virginia



Inner City  
Pittsburgh, PA

# Changing Real Estate Markets

Priority investments:

- 24 hour cities
- mixed-use
- access to transit

(Price Waterhouse  
Coopers, *Emerging  
Trends in Real  
Estate 2003*)



# Changing Markets

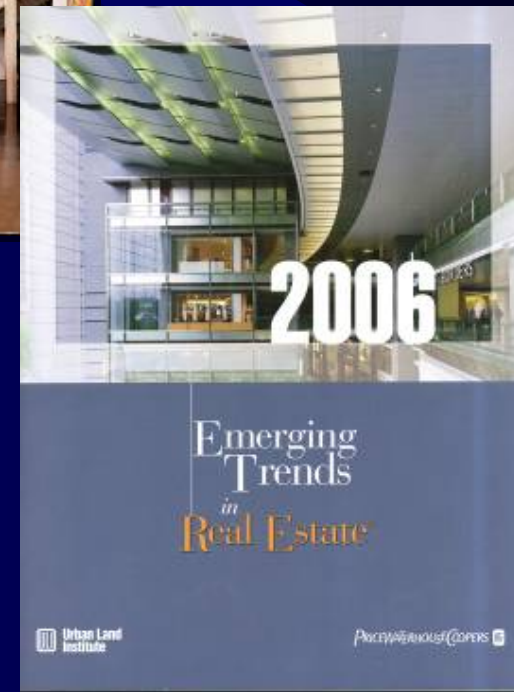


- *Professional Builder:*  
37% of households  
want small lots and  
clustered development
- <2% of new housing  
starts in this category



# Changing Consumer Preferences

- Wall Street Journal: 2005 median price for condos tops single family homes
- 9th record year of condo sales
- Cover of *Dwell* magazine: “Small is the New Big”
- *Business Week*: biggest homebuilders open infill divisions





# Investment Outlook 2005-2010

- **OUT**

- Greenfields
- Suburban office campuses
- Subdivisions without town centers
- “Drive ‘til you qualify”
- Big lot housing

- **IN**

- Brownfields
- Greyfields
- Grey Boxes
- Transit Oriented Districts (TOD)
- Mixed-income housing
- Suburban mixed-use
- Green development

# Trends in Retail



- Free Standing/Big Box
- Enclosed/Regional Malls
- Grocery-anchored strips
- Lifestyle Centers
- Main Street/Town Square/"Places"

# Trends in Office



- Prime locations
- Lively places
- Cool spaces
- Size flexibility
- Shorter lease terms
- Office condos

# Trends in Residential



- Higher prices
- Smaller spaces
- High-amenity design
- Low maintenance living
- Central location
- “Flex” space
- Age in place



# Important Other Uses



- Business incubators, office, research
- Medical centers
- Senior citizen complexes
- Governmental offices
- Civic facilities
- Colleges, multi-university centers, schools

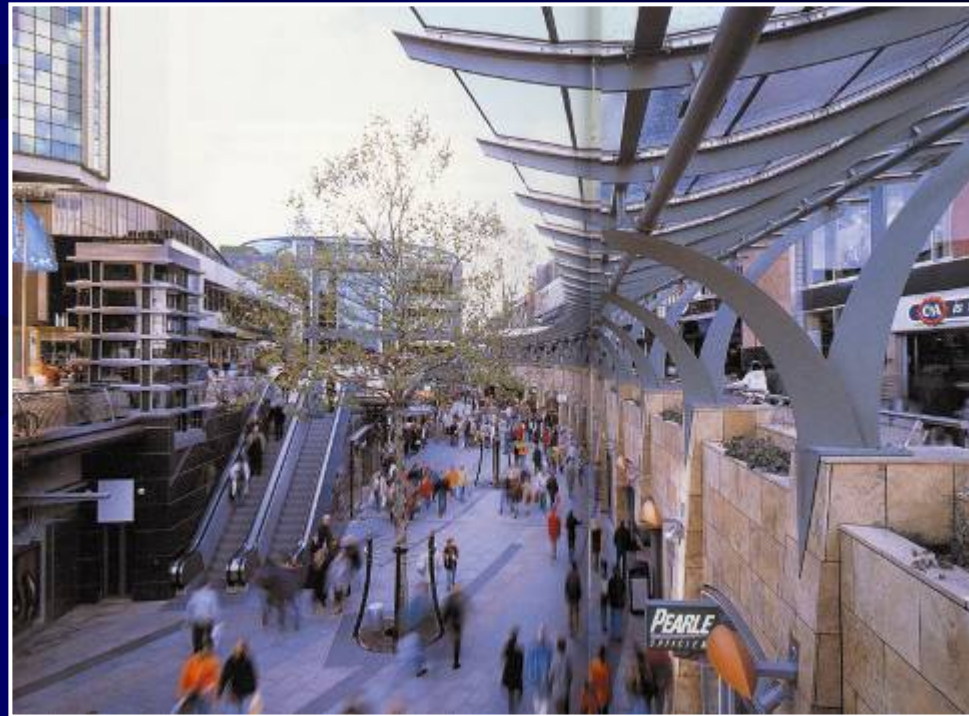
# The Case for Mixed Use



- Highest land values
- Most efficient use of land
- Long term economic sustainability for City
- Strengthens civic identity
- Opportunity for new housing types
- No-drive option

# Transit Oriented Districts

- Walkable, compact, mixed-use districts around transit stations
- ½ mile, 360 degree ring
- Desirable destinations on the line
- Provide choices
- Economic recapture



# What's in a Name?

- *Transit-Oriented Development (TOD)*
- *Transit-Oriented District*
- *Development Around Transit (DAT)*
- *Transit Village*
- *Transit-Ready Development*





TOD: An organizing principle to  
do what we should be doing  
anyway--creating great *people*  
places



TOD: Here to stay because of the  
broad benefits...

# TOD and Federal Transit Administration

- Inundated with transit requests--strategy to allocate and leverage scarce dollars
- \$65+ billion in transit requests now in Washington DC
- Land use and TOD now a critical “New Starts” criteria



# TOD and Regional Governance



- Provides a regional growth strategy
- Allocates and leverages scarce funding
- Ties land use to transportation
- Shapes urban form
- Addresses air quality, open space issues



# TOD and Transit Agency



- Raises ridership
  - Residents 5X more likely
  - Workers 3X more likely
  - Off-peak demand
- Potential for profits/new funding source
- Popular, visible new product line

# TOD and Local Community



- Identity/landmark “places”
- Community amenities (open space, plazas, public art, civic buildings, etc.)
- Reduces local infrastructure costs by 25%

# TOD and Local Community

- Site for infill growth, additional housing
- Protects existing neighborhoods
- Powerful economic development generator



# TOD and Economic Activity: Arlington County Before...





# and After.

30% revenue from 7% of the land  
Surrounding neighborhoods preserved



# Traffic Stayed Constant or Went Down!

<b>Location</b>	<b>1980</b>	<b>Projected for 2000 in 1980 plan</b>	<b>1997</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2003</b>	<b>2004</b>
<b>Clarendon Blvd (East of N Garfield)</b>	<b>3,500</b>	<b>22,200</b>	<b>13,029</b>	<b>14,199</b>	<b>13,611</b>	<b>12,843</b>
<b>North Highland (N of 11th Street)</b>	<b>8,052</b>	<b>7,712</b>	<b>7,587</b>	<b>8,156</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>North Highland (S of Key Blvd)</b>	<b>3,400</b>	<b>7,000</b>	<b>4,906</b>	<b>3,946</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>North Washington Blvd (W of N Daniel)</b>	<b>20,000</b>	<b>25,900</b>	<b>18,468</b>	<b>18,513</b>	<b>17,660</b>	<b>17,230</b>
<b>North Washington Blvd (W of Clarendon Circle)</b>	<b>17,300</b>	<b>21,400</b>	<b>20,232</b>	<b>19,478</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>n/a</b>
<b>Wilson Blvd (E of N Daniel)</b>	<b>15,000</b>	<b>36,900</b>	<b>13,374</b>	<b>n/a</b>	<b>14,174</b>	<b>15,795</b>

# TOD and Economic Activity

- DALLAS:  
LRT @\$800 M—  
\$3.7B in economic  
activity  
(Source: Univ. of No. Texas)
- PORTLAND: MAX  
\$2.4B in new development  
value; Downtown  
Streetcar @\$1.6 B  
(Source: Tri-Met, Portland)

- PITTSBURGH  
BUSWAY:  
54 development projects  
valued at \$302 million  
(Source: Port Authority of  
Allegheny County)

***OVERALL:  
EXPECT 3-5X  
“SPIN -OFF”  
PRIVATE  
INVESTMENT***

# TOD and Property Values

- Washington DC:  
+\$2-4/SF commercial rents
- Portland, OR:
  - +10% rent premiums
- Dallas, TX:
  - + 39% for residential, +53% for office
- Santa Clara, CA:
  - +45% for residential, +23% for commercial



# TOD and Property Values



*Over time,  
TOD's are the  
most valuable  
properties in the  
metro area,  
averaging a  
premium of  
15-20%.*

# TOD and Workforce Housing

- Mixed-use offers local services, amenities without driving
- Transit extends access to jobs
- Reduced dependence on cars—cheaper!



# TOD and Consumers



- Creates “hip” new neighborhoods
- Offers alternative housing types at suburban sites
- Makes transit more convenient
- Reduces need for car
- Opportunity for more affordable housing/lifestyle

But TOD is still just creating great places. How is it really done? What are the elements?



# Creating Great Neighborhoods



# Great Diverse Residential Areas





# Great Public Spaces

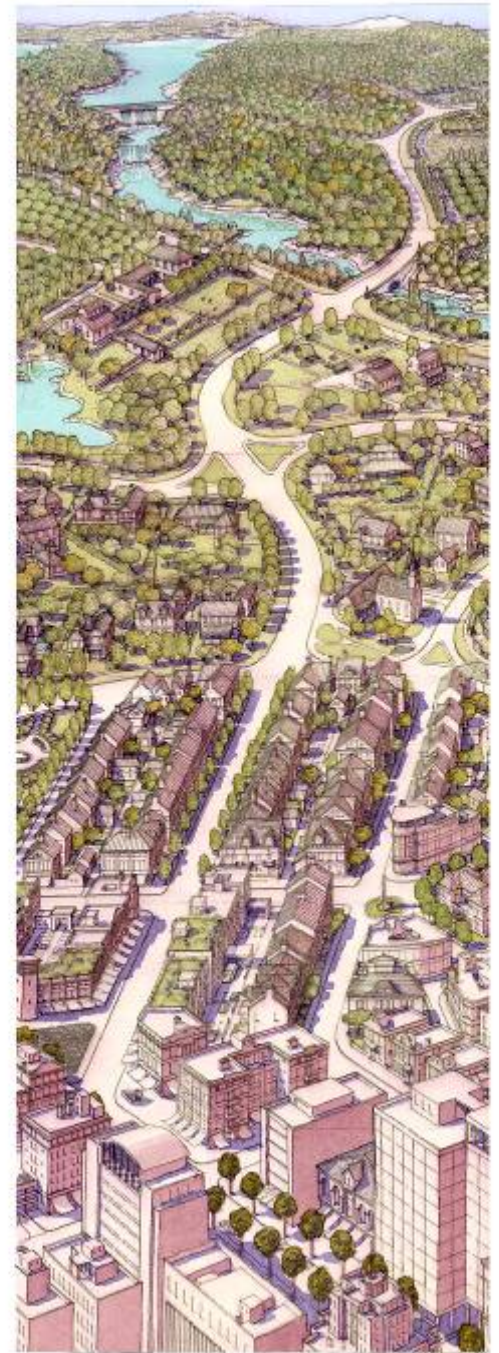


# Great Streets





# Great Street Transitions



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## DISTRICTS

SD

## SPECIAL DISTRICTS

Natural

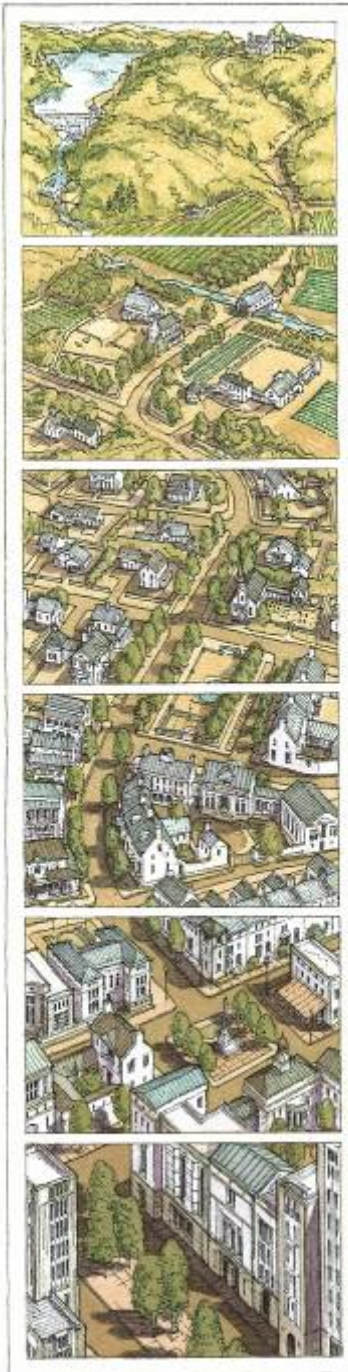
Rural

Suburban

Urban

Urban Center

Urban Core





# Street as Utility



- Auto Dominated
- Mono Culture of Land Uses
- Pedestrian Intolerant
- Anywhere USA



# Street Transformation



- Street Front Buildings
- Mix of Uses
- Pedestrians

# Street Design



- Pedestrian Sidewalks
- Street Landscaping
- Street Furniture



# Street as Place



- Activity
- Bicycling
- People Place

# Street as Utility



- Auto Dominated
- Monoculture of Land Uses
- Pedestrian Intolerant
- Anywhere USA



# Street Transformation



- Pedestrian Sidewalks
- Street Landscaping
- Street Furniture
- Street Medium

# Street Design



- Street Front Buildings
- Mix of Uses



# Street as Place



- Pedestrians
- Activity
- People Place
- Convenient Parking

# Street as Utility



- Auto Dominated
- Monoculture of Land Uses
- Anywhere USA



# Street Transformation



- Street Front Buildings
- Mix of Uses
- Street Medium and Landscaping

# Street as Place



- Pedestrians
- Transit
- Bicycling



# TOD Ingredients: Get the Details Right!



16th Street BART, SF

- Link “Access Priorities” to Design
- Create Immersive Environments
- Not every place has to be the same
- Always think about the Consumer



# Street Running in Center Alignment

- Allows creation of station areas, requires a lot of street width
- Pedestrians must cross through traffic to get to stop

Houston and Strausbourg

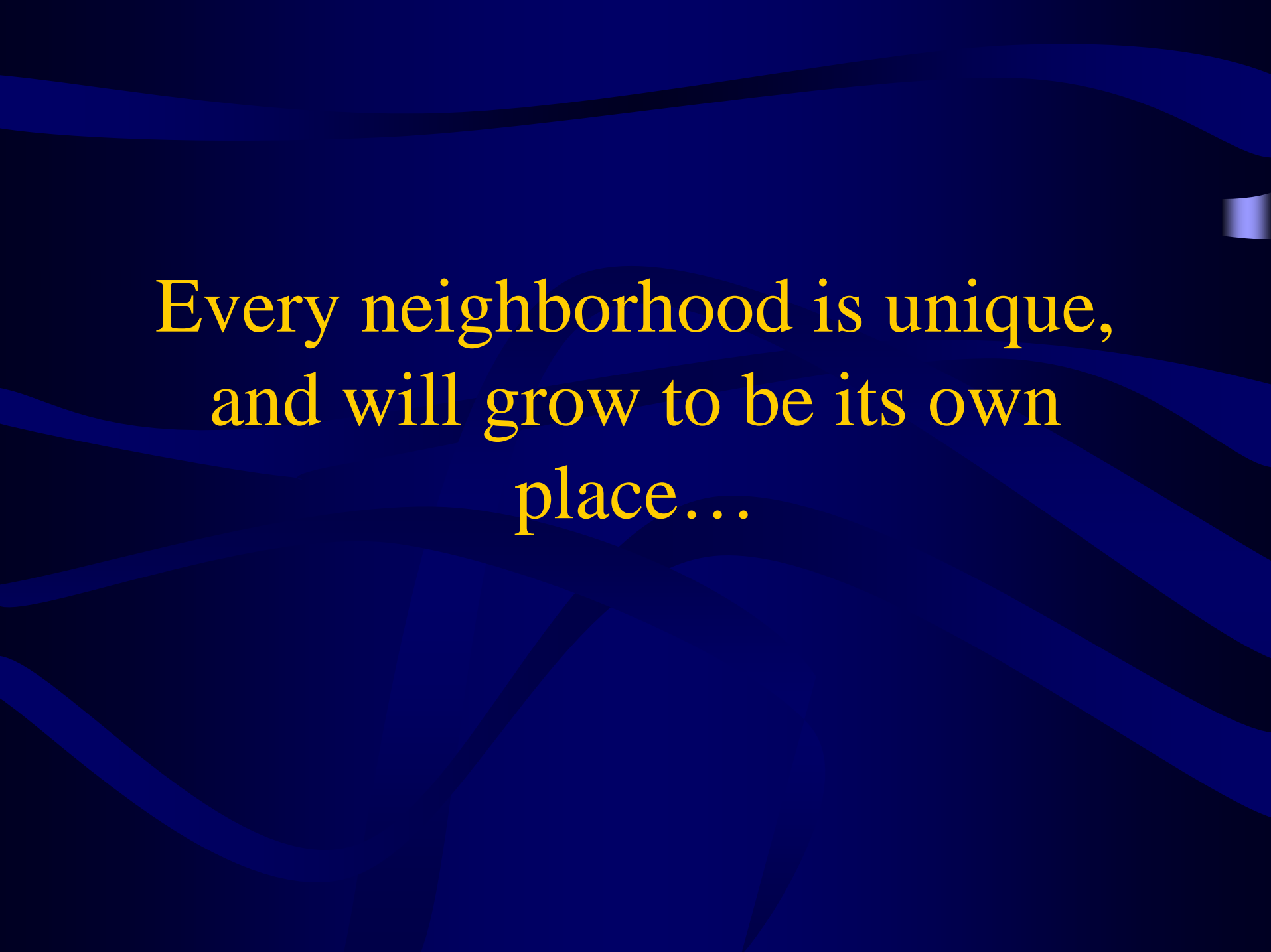


# Street Running, Either Side Alignment

- Better transit-pedestrian interface
- Most suitable for downtown where access trumps speed



Portland, OR



Every neighborhood is unique,  
and will grow to be its own  
place...





Texas Medical Center



Embarcadero, SF

Downtown Houston

## Major Urban Center

- High Rise Buildings
- Office, Residential, Retail, Entertainment, Civic
- Walkable Streets
- Transit Hub



Charlotte, NC



Sugarland  
Town Center

# Urban Center

- Sub-Regional Destination
- Office, Retail, Residential, Entertainment
- Mid and High Rise Buildings
- Walkable and High Transit Connectivity



Denver

# Neighborhood



Barrio Logan, San Diego



Rockridge, Oakland



Midtown Houston

- Primarily Residential, with retail and service core
- Single Family Neighborhoods and more dense housing arrangements
- Mix of Housing Types
- Supports rapid transit, light rail or rapid bus.



# Retail Street



International Blvd., Oakland, CA

Travis and Congress



Portland Streetcar



- Revitalization of historic main streets and neighborhood shopping streets
- Densification preserves surrounding single family neighborhoods
- Walk access to transit
- Connectivity to neighborhoods



Rice University

## Campus/Special Events Center

- Universities, colleges, sports facilities
- Limited residential, office
- Transit connectivity



But great places don't just  
happen...



# What Does it Take to Get Great Places?

- Define Goals  
Upfront: The Vision
- Design for  
Pedestrians and Place
- Leadership!
- Partnerships
- Let the Market Lead



# Common Public Sector Mistakes

- Not insisting on great streets
- Not helping with land assembly
- Wanting retail on every street
- Not understanding density
- Requiring too much parking



# Common Public Sector Mistakes

- Expecting developers to determine the vision
- Not prioritizing the pedestrian FAR into the neighborhoods
- Not insisting on great design and materials





# Development Champions

- Role of the Public Sector
  - Work with community to set long term vision
  - Identify priority development areas
  - Implement meaningful standards/incentives
  - Regulate design over use
- Role of the Private Sector
  - Bring capital and expertise to implement vision
  - Make reasonable profit in short term

# Development Champions

- Role of the Not For Profit Sector
  - Call the question
  - Convene the players
  - Initiate thoughtful planning
  - Educate the community
  - Insist on good design
  - Advocate for good projects
  - Support elected officials

# Words to Live By...

Doug Porter







- Choices
- Connections
- Collaborations



# Working Sessions

- Groups of 10-15
- One of three City areas
- Facilitator, Designer, Recorder
- Goal: Using growth to build great neighborhoods
- Share visions—use Place Types
- Lunch at noon
- Report back on priority issues
- **DON'T BE SHY!**

# Place Types

Places	Activity Mix	Housing Types	Commercial Employment Types	Proposed Scale	Connectivity	Local Examples	Color Code	Examples
<b>Major Urban Center</b>	Office Residential Retail Entertainment Civic Uses	Multi-Family/ Loft	Employment Emphasis, with more than 250,000 sf office and 50,000 sf retail	5 Stories and above	Intermodal Facility/ Transit Hub. Major Regional Destination with quality feeder and circulator connections	Downtown Galleria District Medical Center	<b>MU</b>	
<b>Urban Center</b>	Residential Retail Office	Multi-Family/ Townhome	Limited Office. Less than 250,000 sf office. More than 50,000 sf retail	3 Stories and above	Sub-Regional Destination. Some Park n Ride. Linked district circulator and feeder transit service	Areas of Montrose/ Museum District Allen Parkway	<b>U</b>	
<b>Neighborhood</b>	Residential/ Neighborhood Retail	Multi-Family/ Townhome/ Small Lot Single Family	Local-Serving Retail. No more than 50,000 sf	1-5 Stories	Walk up station. Very Small Park and Ride, if any. Local and express bus service.	Mid-Town West University Magnolia Park Montrose	<b>N</b>	
<b>Retail Street</b>	Residential/ Neighborhood Retail	Small Lot Single Family	Main Street Retail Infill	1-4 Stories	Bus or streetcar corridors. Feeder transit service. Walk up stops. No parking.	Rice Village 19th Street (Heights) Highland Village	<b>R</b>	
<b>Campus/ Special Events Center</b>	University/ Campus Sports Facilities	Limited Multi-Family	Limited Office/ Retail	Varies	Large Commuter Destination	Rice University U of H TSU Reliant Park	<b>C</b>	